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Jewish Research Paper

In the Old Testament, thirty six crimes are listed as being punishable by death (or some other means of capital punishment). Nevertheless, Jews are actually opposed to capital punishment. To justify capital punishment, many quote the lines from the Old Testament “… a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth…” It should be noted, however, that this statement was actually intended to be a measure of restraint; the punishment should not exceed the crime. In general, Jews are opposed to capital punishment. In fact, Israel almost completely abolished capital punishment in 1954. (It was still permissible for Nazi war crimes.)

Jews view life as infinitely precious, and forbid “mercy killings”, as well as suicide. The excuse that someone is about to die anyway is meaningless, which I will explain with a numerical metaphor. Life, remember, is infinitely precious. If you divide infinity by any number, the answer is still infinity. (This is similar to the concept that zero times any number is still zero.) Therefore, a few moments of life is just as precious as many years of it. Under Jewish law, doctors are not allowed to hasten a patient’s death, and must do everything in their power to save a patient’s life, regardless of the patient’s wishes. However, doctors are not obligated to extend a patient’s life beyond its natural length. If a patient is terminally ill, and the only thing keeping them alive is a machine, the doctor is permitted to turn off the machine. Beyond this, any form of euthanasia is equivalent to murder.

Considered the Father of the Semitic religions, Abraham made a covenant with God around 2,000 B.C., marking the start of Judaism. The Tanakh, called the Old Testament by Christians, is a very important Jewish text. Another one is the Torah, and another is the Talmud. There is also the Mishnah, which is a book of Hebrew laws, and the Gemara, which is a collection of Jewish sayings. Jews, like Christians, believe that God will reward the good and punish the wicked. Unlike Christians, Jews believe that the messiah will come, but has not come yet. Jews cannot eat shellfish or any part of the back half of a cow. They also cannot eat pork, and must keep dairy separate from meat. Unlike Christian priests, Jewish rabbis can marry and have children, and don’t have to wear anything special.